

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in this application.

Listing of Claims

Claims 1-33 (Cancelled).

34. (New) An isolated polynucleotide comprising a nucleotide sequence which codes for a protein which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; or a polynucleotide sequence which is fully complementary to said isolated polynucleotide.

35. (New) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, wherein is capable of replication in coryneform bacteria.

36. (New) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, wherein the polynucleotide is RNA.

37. (New) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, which comprises a nucleotide sequence which codes for a protein which comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2.

38. (New) The isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34, which comprises the nucleotide sequence of SEQ ID NO:1.

39. (New) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34.

40. (New) A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34.

41. (New) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 37.

42. (New) A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 37.

43. (New) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 38.

44. (New) A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 38.

45. (New) An isolated polynucleotide, which comprises a nucleotide sequence that hybridizes under stringent conditions to the complement of SEQ ID NO:1 and codes for a protein having O-Succinylhomoserine sulphydralase activity, wherein said stringent conditions comprise hybridization in a buffer comprising 5X SSC at a temperature of from 50 to 68°C and washing in 2X SSC at a temperature of a from 50 to 68°C.

46. (New) A vector comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 45.

47. (New) A host cell comprising the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 45.

48. (New) An isolated polynucleotide consisting of a fragment of at least 20 consecutive nucleotides of SEQ ID NO:1 or the full complement of SEQ ID NO:1, wherein said polynucleotide is a probe or a primer.

49. (New) A process for the preparation of L-amino acids, comprising culturing a bacterial cell in a medium suitable for producing L-amino acids, wherein said bacterial cell comprises an attenuated metZ gene, wherein the metZ gene prior to attenuation comprises the isolated polynucleotide of Claim 34; and recovering the L-amino acid.

50. (New) The process of Claim 49, wherein the L-amino acid is L-methionine.

51. (New) The process of Claim 49, wherein the bacterial cell is a coryneform bacteria.

52. (New) The process of Claim 51, wherein the coryneform bacteria is *Corynebacterium glutimicum*.

53. (New) The process of Claim 49, wherein recovering the L-amino acid comprises

- (a) removing water from the medium;
- (b) removing from 0 to 100 weight % of the biomass formed during the culturing; and
- (c) drying the medium from (a) and (b).

54. (New) The process of Claim 53, wherein the L-amino acid is L-methionine.

55. (New) A process for preparing an L-amino acid containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 49; and mixing the recovered L-amino acid with an animal feed.

56. (New) A process for preparing an L-methionine containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 50; and mixing the recovered L-methionine with an animal feed.

57. A process for preparing an L-amino acid containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 53; and mixing the recovered L-amino acid with an animal feed.

58. (New) A process for preparing an L-methionine containing animal feed, comprising preparing the L-amino acid according to the process of Claim 54; and mixing the recovered L-methionine with an animal feed.